

# **And just like that – there will be trees on George Street**

**The council's plans for George Street and First New Town have advanced a little further with the council making some concessions to feedback – and one of these is that contrary to previous plans there will now be trees planted at either end of George Street.**

Sixteen trees, or eight at either end will help to define the formal structure of the street. No details of the species of trees has yet been confirmed but it is important they are not so high that they obscure the important buildings in the street.

The trees will be mature and will be placed in the planting areas, not just in tubs as other street trees across the city have been planted and abandoned.

In addition there will be more parking for blue badge holders on George Street than there is at present with provision for 27 spaces. Car drivers with a blue badge will be able to ensure there is a space before driving onto the otherwise pedestrianised area. Dial-a-Ride which transports disabled passengers will also be able to access the area 24/7. The council's Transport Convener Scott Arthur is hopeful that the

Business Improvement District, Essential Edinburgh will help to regulate this kind of arrangement.

There are possibly going to be mobility scooters available at a mobility hub in much the same way as there is at The Gyle Shopping Centre for example.

But this must be regarded as a win for those who spoke up for trees in this renewed landscape – which will in any event not begin until 2025/26 with a fair wind behind all the Traffic Regulation Orders and other planning necessities.

Cllr Arthur said: “It is an interesting discussion. We spent quite a lot of time in the workshop talking in almost ideological terms about whether or not there should be trees. People did adopt quite strongly held positions. But then we moved on to look at some of the options and some of the illustrations for the street. And I think that was the thing that actually brought people together. I think you can see it could add a bit of value.”

The workshop included bodies such as Historic Environment Scotland and the Cockburn Association.

Although cubic trees have already been given short shrift, there is no definition as yet on the species which will be introduced, and that will come later when the plans are developed further.

And finally the council is now planning to open the street to licensed taxis after 10 pm in a bid to make the area safer – particularly for women, but actually for anyone who is out enjoying the evening and nighttime bars and restaurants. The area will be secured with a “bollard-based enforcement system”.

Councillors will hear about the progress next Thursday at the Transport and Environment committee meeting. The papers for that meeting are [here](#).

The [George Street First New Town](#) plans have already been approved in principle, but the council must now progress its plans through the glacially slow planning process.

Andrew Heald Forestry Consultant has suggested some alternatives depending on the size of the planting position. Andrew said: “The trees could be maybe another Norway Maple (that’s the tree outside St Andrew’s & St George’s Church). And some medium sized trees ideas – Silver Birch is always good – Field Maple wouldn’t get too big – Laburnum (yellow flowers) – and some Ginkgos (maiden air tree) and lastly some Wheatley Elms (they do get big) and you can see them in Braidburn Valley Park.”

We hope the council listens to some of these suggestions.



This is what George Street would look like with just four trees at either end but the recommendation is to put in eight at each end.